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Egypt-Yemen: Egypt has reaffirmed that the two imprisoned AID officials will soon be released.

Egyptian Vice President Amir authorized Foreign Minister Riad on 8 May to assure the US that Egypt "is doing its best." Riad repeated on 9 May that the US officials would not stand trial.

Meanwhile, Yemeni President Sallal--presumably unaware of Cairo's assurances--on 8 May made statements indicating that he is still planning to try the prisoners. Both he and the minister of interior have mentioned "evidence" including documents, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The US team that is to remove the AID files has been prevented from leaving Cairo on the pretext that there is no aircraft space available.

The US Embassy in Sana on 8 May received a note from the Yemeni Foreign Office asking that the US consul in Taiz be transferred to Sana "for his personal safety" and that the consulate be closed. This may presage a move to instigate mob destruction of the AID building, [REDACTED] although the Yemeni regime reportedly has issued instructions against any demonstrations. [REDACTED]

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Dominican Republic: President Balaguer has proclaimed a hard and uncompromising line toward his opponents and detractors.

In a major TV address on 8 May, Balaguer absolved his government of responsibility for recent political terrorism and suggested that Communists were responsible for much of the violence. He warned that extreme--but legal--measures would be taken against terrorists.

Balaguer placed a large share of blame for the deteriorating political situation on the left-of-center Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). He charged that the PRD's boycott of congress was designed to exacerbate political tensions. In a statement that seems sure to draw a strong PRD reaction, Balaguer implied that Senator Castro--who said he was seriously injured in a recent terrorist attack--had accidentally wounded himself.

It is likely that Balaguer's unyielding line will hasten the political polarization that has been developing in recent months. The President's belligerency toward the PRD and his references to Communist-inspired terrorism are intended to strengthen his position with his rightist supporters, who may be concerned that Balaguer has been too lenient with the opposition.

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India: The election of the Congress Party's presidential candidate provides a much needed boost to both the party's and Prime Minister Gandhi's sagging prestige. Zakir Husain, a prominent educator who previously served as vice president, is the first Muslim to hold the prestigious, though largely ceremonial, office. Husain has told Ambassador Bowles that he intends to counsel Mrs. Gandhi to form a strong government and improve relations with Pakistan, but his influence on governmental policy will probably be minimal.

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Indonesia: The Suharto regime, while continuing the public polemic with Peking, is trying to damp down popular manifestations of anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia. Orders to this effect have been sent to commanders in the outlying regions, where Chinese shopkeepers are still being subjected to scattered and sporadic harassment. When the recently expelled Indonesian chargé in Peking arrives home later this week, authorities will probably permit demonstrations protesting the abuse he received before leaving China, but will try to keep them within bounds.

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Panama: President Robles sent Foreign Minister Eleta to New York on 8 May to wind up the canal treaty negotiations "as soon as possible" and return with the final drafts. Encouraged by his talks with President Johnson at Punta del Este, Robles hopes to have the 27-month-old negotiations concluded by early summer. The Panamanians want the treaties signed before 1 July in order to prepare public opinion for ratification by a special assembly session in August or September. Robles also wants the canal issue settled before intensive campaigning begins for the May 1968 election.

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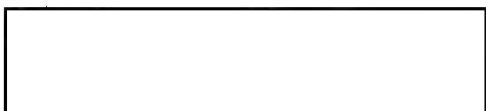
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